TRAVEL TUTOR

Volume 1, Number 5
August, 2006

DID YOU KNOW…

You Can Receive JTR/JFTR Updates by Email?

To receive immediate updates of all major changes to the JTR/JFTR, follow these steps:

1. Go to https://secureapp2.hqda.pentagon.mil/perdiem
2. In the upper right navigation bar, click on "Mailing List"
3. Click on "Subscribe"
4. A preprinted, addressed email appears. DO NOT make any changes to the email – send as is. Click "Send" as with any email.
5. You will receive an email confirming your addition to the list. Your email address is anonymous and will not be available to anyone else on the mailing list.

New Foreign Per Diem Rates Released

To view the new rates for OCONUS and Foreign Per Diem that became effective August, 2006, go to https://secureapp2.hqda.pentagon.mil/perdiem and click Per Diem Rates.

Tax Exempt Forms Are Available in DTS and on the GSA Website

For CONUS travel, many states/cities/counties allow a tax exemption for hotel stays while on official travel. Many tax exempt forms can be located through links on the DTS Per Diem Entitlements page. Once on the entitlements page, click on GSA State Tax Exemption Listing to access the GSA web page listing tax exempt forms. If you do not use DTS yet, you can access the information on www.gsa.gov. Once on the website, enter "State Tax Exemption Forms" in the search box and click Search. The site list includes forms provided by states that responded to a GSA request. If the form you need is not available on the GSA site, you can check the website of the state you are visiting to determine if an exemption is offered and, if so, print a form.

Present the completed form to the hotel staff at check-in. However, not all hotels accept the forms. Individual hotel policy dictates whether they will process tax exemptions for government employees.

DTA Corner

Training Certificates Available for DTS Enterprise Web Training System

Only training certificates should be used within the DTS Enterprise Web Training System (EWTS). These training certificates are valid for three years from the date of issue and must be renewed prior to their expiration dates. Each site's training Point of Contact (POC) must keep track of their certificates' expiration dates and request the re-issuance of new certificates at least 30 days in advance of their expiration date. If you have questions on EWTS training certificates or to request certificates, send an e-mail to: EWTSCertRequests@osd.pentagon.mil

Special Character Use in DTS

When requesting CTO assistance in booking flights, lodging, rental car, or rail reservations, DTS will auto-populate a generic message in the comments to the travel agent box. Users may add additional comments or delete the auto-populated comments and personalize their request. When typing additional comments, the user should limit the use of punctuation marks and special characters to periods, commas, slashes, and dashes; all others should be avoided. Although, DTS does not restrict the use of punctuation marks and special characters, if these symbols are used, the request for assistance will not reach the Commercial Travel Office (CTO) for processing. In order to ensure the request for assistance reaches your CTO, the following punctuation marks and special characters should be avoided: **! @ # $ % ^ & * ( ) _ = + - | \ { } [ ] ; ' " ? < > ` ~** (*Reminder:* Selecting the "Request Assistance" link requires manual intervention by the CTO and may result in a higher transaction fee.)

New Baggage Rules Affect US Airline Passengers

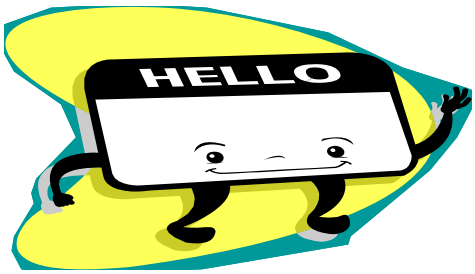
Reports received from law enforcement officials in the UK on August 10 prompted the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to issue emergency regulations for all US airline passengers. These reports also prompted an elevated level of security. The TSA website carries the most current list of approved and banned items for checked and carryon baggage. Before you travel, visit the website www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/new-items.shtm to learn more about the restrictions and obtain a complete list of approved/unapproved items for baggage. The list below was copied from the TSA website at press time.

To ensure the health and welfare of certain air travelers the following items are permitted.

- Small amounts of Baby formula and breast milk if a baby or small child is traveling
- Liquid prescription medicine with a name that matches the passenger's ticket
- Up to 8 oz. of liquid or gel low blood sugar treatment
- Up to 4 oz. of essential non-prescription liquid medications
- Gel-filled bras and similar prosthetics worn for ***medical reasons***

You are permitted to bring solid cosmetics and personal hygiene items such as lipstick, lip balm and similar solids. Please remember these items must be solid and not liquid, gel or aerosol.

Conference Fees



The Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) now states that advance payment of discounted conference fees may be treated as an allowable travel advance and permits the reimbursement of the prepayment of ''early bird'' discounted registration fees to attend a conference or training seminar. This clarification is added to allow the Federal Government to take advantage of ''early bird'' registration discounts, thereby saving Government funds. The FTR and any corresponding documents may be accessed at the GSA website: www.gsa.gov/ftr. To view changes, go to https://secureapp2.hqda.pentagon.mil/perdiem/. Click on Monthly Changes on the top menu. When the list appears, click on 236.

ATTN: Government Travel Charge Card Agency Program Coordinators!!

New EAGLS Functionality

The Bank of America Government Card Services team is making investments in technology to better serve DOD. To date, the Bank of America has:

- Expanded the amount of transaction data accessible in reports to now include 36 months of data.
- Improved the timeliness of data appearing in reports, which eliminates the delay in displaying posted transaction information between EAGLS and the reporting tool.
- Improved the account activate/deactivate functionality, providing real-time updates to enable or disable charging privileges on accounts.
- Added report viewer formats, enabling users to easily access printable versions of reports as well as spreadsheet versions that can be sorted, filtered, imported or manipulated as needed.
- Enhanced the Account Listing Report by adding new fields and filters.

DTS Reservations Refresh - Coming Soon

Have you ever wished DTS was more intuitive, easier to use, and confirmed reservations immediately? If so, you are not alone, and you will certainly appreciate the positive changes that are included in the DTS Reservations Refresh scheduled for release within a few months. DTS Reservations Refresh is a re-design of the current DTS reservation process and incorporates changes that address some on-going user issues. The "Refresh" will improve your DTS experience. Here is a summary of some of the exciting changes:

General Changes:

- Booking will take place as you select air, lodging, and rental car components and becomes a confirmed reservation immediately. This is termed the "Book as You Go" concept.
- A synonym database will be added that provides closely matched synonyms to identify abbreviated or incorrectly spelled location names.
- Email alerts for unticketed reservations should eliminate "no ticket at airport" occurrences.
- A system guided flow controller will direct the user through the process of creating a successful reservation including a prompt for return travel.

Trip Overview Changes:

The Trip Overview screen (initial screen when creating an authorization) will have two questions for the user to answer:

1. What mode of transportation will you use in traveling to the TDY location?
2. Will you need a hotel or rental car?

The answer to these questions will provide the information for the system to determine the best commercial travel options for the user.

Reservation Changes:

Air:

- Separated tabs display flights complying with federal regulations such as the Fly America Act and the GSA city pair program.
- Each leg of the trip will display in chronological order including a return flight to the starting point.

Rental Car:

- Rental car agencies are separated into two tabs to comply with federal regulations.
- A pre-audit is created if the traveler does not use the least expensive available vehicle.

Lodging:

- More accurate hotel availability will display based on proximity to TDY location.
- "Frequent guest" number/s can be added and are submitted directly to the vendor.

Payment Information:

- Method of reimbursement will be consolidated onto a single page.
- Summary page will provide detailed information for the ticketed traveler.

Itinerary

- Users will be provided a chronological itinerary with confirmation numbers.
- The itinerary will be printable or can be emailed to multiple addresses and PDAs.

Development of this effort was about 85% complete at press time. It will be a refreshing change!

Introducing the new DTS Quick Reference Guide for Updating Itinerary and Reservations in an Authorization

If you have experienced difficulties making itinerary or reservation changes in your authorization, help has arrived. The DTMO has released the Quick Reference Guide for Updating Itinerary and Reservations in an Authorization. This guide can assist you with changes to:

- your TDY dates,
- per diem locations,
- ticketed information,
- airline, hotel, and rental car reservations.

There are also helpful reminders and special instructions to ensure that this process is accurate. This guide can be found on the DTS Travel Center website: http://www.dtstravelcenter.dod.mil/Training/Training_Main.cfm. Click "Training" and then "Quick References" from the list. Please note that the Quick Reference Guide for Updating Itinerary and Reservations in an Authorization is for trips that have a departure date in the future. A Quick Reference Guide is in development to address updating vouchers.

Voucher News

For DTS Debt Management Monitors, Authorizing Officials, and Travelers

These Post Payment Review (PPR) points are intended to help you understand the PPR process and avoid errors or correct an error if it occurs.

For the LDTA and DMM:

* In accordance with the Debt Management Monitor Roles and Responsibilities; (Chapter 4 of DMM Tools), the post payment auditors are required to notify the Lead Defense Travel Administrator (LDTA) and/or the Debt Management Monitor (DMM) of any overpayment found on a traveler's voucher. It is the responsibility of the LDTA or DMM to prepare an amended voucher according to the auditor's findings and to establish and resolve the debt.

* PPR auditors have been receiving faxes of travelers' Bank of America (BOA) statements. At no time will the auditors ask for this statement nor does it serve as a proper receipt. In addition, the statement includes certain personal information including the account number which should not be faxed to an unsecured office. If the auditors need verification of charges to the travelers account, they have "read only" access to BOA. Do not fax BOA statements or any other forms containing sensitive personal information.

* The PPR auditors do not determine if actual debt exists. Please follow the instructions contained in the overpayment messages. The messages are sent to alert the LDTA and/or DMM that there may be an error in payment. It is the responsibility of the traveler's organization to determine if the over payment has occurred and to take action if necessary. See Debt Management Monitor Roles and Responsibilities (Chapter 3.4. Establish the Debt).

TRAVELER/AUTHORIZING OFFICIAL ISSUES:

* Requests for receipts still head the list of problems encountered by PPR. Two requests will be made for the required receipts. If receipts are not received, a message will be sent indicating that action is to be taken to recoup the entire cost of the trip. (DODFMR Vol. 9, Chapter 2, 020402. Traveler)

* When providing receipts or other documents via fax, please use a proper cover sheet showing the person to whom the documents are intended and the number of pages. The Post Payment Audit Branch receives more than 100 faxes each day. With a staff of more than 40 people, it is easy for faxes to be delayed or lost if it is not addressed to a particular staff member.

* Below is a list of errors noted during July, 2006.

Claiming and being reimbursed the entire amount of the ATM Advance.

Claiming and being reimbursed the cost of gas for POV as well as mileage.

Not claiming in-and-around mileage separate from to/from terminal mileage.

Claiming ATM fees that are not reflected on the Bank of America statement.

Claiming and being reimbursed lodging on a Local Voucher

Claiming and being paid twice for travel agent fees.

Claiming and being reimbursed for lodging, rental car, and travel agent fees in 'other expenses'.
Claiming office supplies and work-related items; e.g., PO Box rental fees as travel entitlements rather than submitting a claim for the reimbursement as a mission Expense.

Not changing the amount paid for lodging on the voucher upon return from TDY when the amount was different from the maximum allowed for the area visited.

Claiming and being reimbursed for tips - civilians are not authorized tips unless for official government baggage.

Claiming and being reimbursed for more ATM Fees than were actually recorded.

Not claiming lodging taxes.

Each month trip records are archived with no Service/ Agency entered in the appropriate field. Travelers must show the proper Service or Agency designation.

Published by: Defense Travel Management Office
4601 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 800
Arlington, VA 22203
http://www.dtstravelcenter.dod.mil/